

“‘Hay que armar el brazo...pero tambien debe armarse el cerebro’:  
The Partido Liberal Mexicano’s Educational Projects”

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## Abstract

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mexican anarchist organization El Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) moved to the U.S. Southwest after being politically exiled by Porfirio Diaz. Working from several cities, including Los Angeles, California, they continued to publish their newspaper *Regeneracion*. The PLM’s educational ideology and practice has been understudied by scholars. The PLM’s philosophy on revolution called for simultaneous mobilization and education of the disenfranchised. In the pages of *Regeneracion*, they published educational materials with the goal of making social revolution accessible to the masses. Inspired by Spanish anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer, they encouraged their readers in the U.S. and Mexico to establish *escuelas racionalistas*, liberal schools with the purpose of educating working class and rural laborer populations of all ages. As political activists and educators, PLM members worked toward an ideal society that both dismantled oppressive political regimes and secured liberation.

Mexico experienced its first social revolution at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From approximately 1900 to 1920, Mexico’s citizens engaged in political organizing through a variety of strikes, peaceful and armed rebellions, and civil war to criticize and contest the authoritative government of Porfirio Diaz (1876–1911). The political, social, and cultural ideologies circulating at the time—originating from both within and beyond Mexico— captured the imaginations of organizers, public intellectuals, and every day people. Likewise, the events and participants of the revolution in Mexico have captured the interest of scholars since.<sup>1</sup> Scholars who write about the revolution have often focused on the formally defined politics that led to the revolution. Broader movements of people advocating for women’s rights, indigenous rights, and educational rights have been less studied. This paper examines the intersection between political and educational efforts led by the Mexican anarcho-communist organization the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM).<sup>2</sup>

As ideologues and participants of revolution along the U.S.-Mexico border during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the PLM’s educational outlook is relevant to transnational audiences. Scholars

have explored the tenants of the PLM's political ideology, paying close attention to the influence the organization had on the Mexican Revolution of 1910, subsequent Mexican and Mexican-American political activity along the U.S.-Mexico border, and leftist movements around the world. Recent research provides necessary analyses that make the PLM relevant to the political and social context of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. At the same time, this new scholarship has expanded our understanding of the PLM's transnational influence, as well as our assessment of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexico and the United States, by revealing the complexities and limitations of the PLM's political ideas and activities.<sup>3</sup>

In concurrence with the work being done by PLM scholars, this article addresses the PLM's application of anarchist political ideology on educational frameworks and practices. Inspired in large part by Spanish anarchist Francisco Ferrer, the PLM made efforts to educate its audience through its independent newspaper *Regeneración* and encouraged its readership to establish autonomous community schools. Essential to PLM's educational ideology and practice, was the belief that an anarchist revolution could only be successful with the full participation of everyone in society. The PLM believed that to achieve that level of involvement, the populace had to be educated as well as politicized. To this end, the PLM used *Regeneración* as the primary outlet for the dissemination of propaganda that both presented their views on education and critiqued others, particularly the Mexican and U.S. institutions. In the pages of *Regeneración*, the PLM published this information using a variety of mediums that included, but were not limited to, articles, manifestos, poetry, plays, and images. This paper focuses on the written work used by the PLM for educational purposes. While not intended as an in-depth analysis of all propaganda material, this article explores the ways the PLM used the various mediums to educate, present ideas on education, and encourage community education among its readership.<sup>4</sup>

The PLM's participation in the international flow of information that linked it to other leftists in Europe and the American continent allowed it to engage audiences in a transnational forum. The PLM was primarily concerned with the revolutionary movements in Mexico; however, as the decade of 1910 advanced the organization expanded its focus to include international events. The development of anarchist thought within the PLM was in large part influenced by members' experiences as migrants in the U.S. Southwest. The hardships they faced as migrants, as well as the political climate in Mexico and the United States at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, made the PLM's work as both organizers and educators extremely difficult. Anarchist practices were criminalized by the U.S. government and covered negatively in the U.S. mainstream press. Authorities constantly surveilled and jailed organizers for their activism. Nonetheless, the PLM continued to propagate anarchist politics on both sides of the border. More importantly, it worked relentlessly to emphasize the necessity of education in revolution.

### Arriving

As noted above, the PLM was influenced by, and was in communication with, its counterparts in other parts of the world. As influential as the PLM and other Mexican anarchists were during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were not the first to engage in these types of political activities. Mexico and Latin America have a history of anarchist activity, much of it involving independent publications and educational efforts. Anarchism appeared in Latin America through European immigrants during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A large influx of migrants to Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, and Chile, among other places, contributed to the dissemination and practice of anarchist ideals. In Latin America and the Caribbean these European anarchists connected with practices of communalism and collectivism inspired by indigenous or early Christian ideals. The arrival of anarchists such as Petro Gori in Argentina and Plotino Rhodakanaty in Mexico marked

the beginning of anarchist activity in those countries. In Argentina, Mexico, and Chile, the first wave of anarchist resistance came from early propaganda. Often published in independent newspapers such as *El Oprimido* (1893) in Chile and *El Perseguido* (1890–1897) in Argentina, anarchist propaganda helped organizers connect with the populace. Later, anarchist-established worker unions and other mutualistic organizations sought to address the concerns and needs of the common folk. Organizations such as the “Federacion Obrera Regional Argentina (F.O.R.A.)” in 1901 and the I.W.W. in Chile in 1919 (allegedly modeled after the Industrial Workers of the World organization in the United States) represented urban and rural workers.<sup>5</sup>

In Mexico, a considerable amount of anarchist activity existed between 1860 and 1890. Plotino Rhodakanaty’s activities, and those of his comrades, led to the establishment of various organizations, such as La Social. These organizations became popular among urban workers, leading to the first known Mexican labor strike in 1865. Their activities also drew attention among the growing agrarian movement. Rhodkanatay established a school in the state of Mexico, but later left it because he disagreed with the direction it was taking. By the 1870s, anarchist activity had decreased. Ineffective organization and poor planning of actions led to the easy persecution and decline in popularity of La Social and other groups. Rising industrialization in the cities and limited resources in rural areas for a revolt limited their influence. The next decade saw an even greater decrease in activity, therefore no substantive transfer of legacy to early-20<sup>th</sup>-century anarchists. Porfirio Díaz’s consolidation of power and his ability to wield it proved challenging for the anarchists of this early era.<sup>6</sup>

### The Founding of PLM and *Regeneración*

Ricardo Flores Magón, one of the most influential PLM organizers, began his political activity at an early age, participating in anti-Díaz and anti-re-election protests as a student

organizer. He was arrested for the first time in 1892 along with his older brother Jesus. After this, he was not publically visible for years until 1900 when he and Jesus began the publication of *Regeneración*. The newspaper initially was tagged as an “Independent Juridical Journal” and served to shed light on corruption in the judicial system and the Díaz government in Mexico City. In addition, Ricardo, Jesus, and their youngest brother, Enrique, worked closely with various liberal groups organizing against the Díaz government across Mexico. A few months after its initial launch, *Regeneración* was relaunched as an “Independent Journal of Combat” and became a major source of information about anti-Díaz groups and their activities, as well as an outlet to openly criticize the government.

When the Flores Magón brothers intensified their attack on the Díaz government’s practices, they became primary targets of persecution. The *Regeneración* offices were raided several times, and the brothers jailed on multiple occasions. They persevered for a few years, at times using other newspapers to publish their writings. In April 1903, they participated in a rally outside the national palace in Mexico City and continued to publish anti-government writings in the newspaper *El Hijo del Ahuizote*. Soon, the Flores Magón brothers (Ricardo and Enrique) and their comrades, Juan Sarabia and Librado Rivera, were arrested and their offices were shut down. Shortly after their release from prison, in June 1903, the Mexican Supreme Court ratified a decision that made it illegal for any newspaper to publish anything written by the Flores Magón brothers.

The 1903 censorship law forced the brothers’ decision to move to the United States where they hoped to continue their publishing and political activities. Once they raised enough money to buy a printing press they resumed the publication of *Regeneración* in late 1904, in San Antonio, Texas. Next, in 1905, the Flores Magón brothers and their comrades moved to Saint Louis, Missouri and established the Junta Organizadora del Partido Liberal Mexicano (Junta).

The name served to distance themselves from the earlier liberal party in Mexico. The Junta, allied organizers, family members, and frequent contributors to *Regeneración* are collectively known as the PLM. By 1910, the PLM established Los Angeles, California as their base of operation.<sup>7</sup>

### Ideas on Education

Central to the PLM's political organizing was an open dialogue with its supporters. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1906, *Regeneración* initiated discussions on education. An article under the headline "El Deber de los Parias (The Obligation of the Outcasts)" described the necessity of progressive education. It stated, "educators should teach children to be liberators, not submissive." The article encouraged intellectuals, teachers, and writers to do their part in educating the populace to recognize the sources of oppression and be proactive agents of change. The article pointed out that illiteracy, both in the fields and in the city, added to the oppression of the Mexican people. The PLM argued that the masses were unable to fight their oppressors if they were unaware of their oppression. Intellectuals understood this oppression and the benefit that it provided the wealthy and elite classes. For this reason, the PLM called on them to align with the "outcasts."<sup>8</sup> By urging intellectuals and instructors to join the effort to organize and educate the people, the PLM recognized the importance of education within revolution. In their exile, away from resources allowing them to implement some of these ideals, members of the PLM called on those who were sympathetic to their vision to provide resources and support.

Another article titled "Bases" appeared in the same issue of *Regeneración*. It described the necessary steps and duties that PLM organizations around Mexico and elsewhere should follow. One task the PLM gave its readers was to organize public readings and distribution of *Regeneración*. PLM asked these groups to both organize and educate their membership, and emphasized that both should be done simultaneously. The article encouraged organizers to reject

education from the clergy by teaching their families about liberal ideals, including unionization, participation in civic duties, and engagement in liberation practices.

In various issues of *Regeneración*, the PLM used the tag line “Mexicano: tu mejor amigo es un fusil” encouraging the Mexican people to take up arms.<sup>9</sup> Yet, this advocacy to take up arms was juxtaposed with the peaceful means of education. In the issue published on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1910, the translator for the English section of the newspaper, Alfred G. Sanftleben, commented on the usage of this phrase at a recent rally. He agreed that when peaceful opposition does not work, violence must be used against the oppressor. He suggested, however, that the counterpart to violence, education, should be highly valued as well. Sanftleben argued that education provides vitality and continuity to revolution. This idea was exemplified in his tagline “hay que armar el brazo, es cierto; pero tambien debe armarse el cerebro.”<sup>10</sup> To achieve long-lasting victory, he wrote, there must be intellectual advancement. The rifle was not enough; violence must be paired with strong convictions and knowledge. Sanftleben cited the many instances, like the Cananea strike (1906), when the government used the rifle against movements to re-oppress the people. He reminded the reader that education allowed oppressed people to recognize their subjugated position and their common interests. He concluded by saying that only the rifle paired with a strong education would create true and long-lasting liberty.<sup>11</sup>

In time, PLM members endorsed one educator as their pedagogical mentor. In its mission to encourage new forms of education, the PLM supported educational ideas proposed by their contemporaries, namely those of the Spanish-Catalan anarchist Francisco Ferrer (1859-1909). Ferrer was successful in establishing the “Escuela Moderna” in Madrid, Spain in 1906, and he became an inspiration to the PLM. His school emphasized teaching anarchist social values with a curriculum premised on scientific epistemology and rational thinking. Unfortunately, Ferrer was constantly prosecuted, leading to the closure of the school and his eventual execution in 1909.<sup>12</sup>



Several issues of *Regeneración* mentioned Ferrer's school and provided commentary on his trial and death.

Ferrer's death, however, did not deter PLM organizers from implementing an anarchist-based education. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1910, Práxedes Guerrero, one of the most educated and charismatic organizers in the PLM, wrote an article titled "Impulsemos la Enseñanza Racionalista." Here, he proposed that PLM groups establish schools similar to Ferrer's. Written near the first anniversary of Ferrer's death, the article encouraged organizers to establish schools in their communities. Guerrero saw the building of schools as a fitting tribute to Ferrer. Instead of protests, Guerrero suggested that the politically conscious honor Ferrer by practicing what he propagated. Guerrero viewed the establishment of escuelas racionalistas as a concrete way to put the PLM's ideals into action. The PLM's main objective was to encourage the Mexican people to liberate themselves from the oppressive government. Thus, most of the pages in *Regeneración* were filled with political rhetoric aimed at exposing the Díaz regime for its danger to the future of Mexico. Importantly, the escuelas racionalistas provided the PLM with a concrete plan to put much of this rhetoric into action. Guerrero suggested the PLM go beyond political action and begin implementing social changes in the communities they represented.

In addition to disseminating their ideas on education, PLM members also critiqued the existing systems of education. In Mexico, public education, as provided by the states and the federal government, was heavily influenced by positivist tenets that stressed order and authority. The PLM recognized the use of education as an extension of institutional oppression used to keep the poor and the middle class submissive and controlled. The PLM described this type of education as "cadenas de los libros."<sup>13</sup> They pointed out that the education students received under this system taught them to accept their oppression as part of a natural order. They were taught not to question the authority of the state. Furthermore, most of the population at the time

spent its time working to survive and only a lucky few attended school and college. Thus, education did not benefit the masses. The existing educational system, the PLM wrote, was a tool the government used to prevent the population from having any hopes of change.

Commenting on the topic of education as fostering oppression or liberation, an article in the issue of *Regeneración* published on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1910 stated: “De ese modo cierra el tirano todas las puertas a la clase trabajadora Mexicana arrebatándole dos de los principales agentes de fuerza moral: la educación y el bienestar.”<sup>14</sup> Again, the PLM saw the importance of education as a liberating tool. The Diaz government used education, or the lack thereof, to keep the people ignorant and dependent on the regime. The PLM argued that to truly liberate the people of Mexico, organizers must reverse the damage done by the regime, and education was essential in that goal.

The PLM also criticized Francisco I. Madero for attempting to limit the Mexican people’s access to education. When Madero took power in 1911, he and his associates proposed that Mexicans wait at least a generation to see changes implemented. They argued that the masses should be educated before taking control of the means of production. However, the government lacked the means and initiative to implement full-scale public education. Therefore, education became the barrier for a true social revolution. The Madero government’s proposed education would extend the system that already existed. The PLM recognized this campaign as an attempt to negate the people freedom. This was another reason the PLM emphasized educating while organizing. The education that Madero suggested for the people was one that would assimilate them in to the existing social and political system. The education that the PLM proposed would help the people fight those oppressive systems.

In the United States, the PLM advocated for the establishment of escuelas racionalistas to combat the inequalities that Mexicans had to face. Articles in *Regeneración* repeatedly

mentioned the segregation Mexican children experienced in U.S. schools. While commenting on a lynching of a Mexican in Texas, Práxedes Guerrero accused predominantly-white-serving schools of instilling an education that fostered hate crimes against Mexicans and other people of color. Guerrero viewed the establishment of escuelas racionalistas as a concrete action to counter the discrimination and inadequacies present in segregated schools in the United States.

PLM members, like other anarchists, believed the road to liberation must be discovered by all people, independent of a leader's influence. They believed the education and mobilization of the oppressed were dependent on each other and must be carried out in conjunction. The PLM encouraged solidarity among the oppressed for an anarchist revolution to be successful, a status that could not be achieved if the populace was not educated on the nature of its oppression. This knowledge could not be taught or given to them by a leader or teacher, it had to be learned collectively.

The PLM criticized the state and its educational institutions and proffered anarchist ideals to lead the path towards true liberation. The PLM believed that formal government threatened individual liberties and collective well-being. The members of the PLM hoped to influence the Mexican populace to mobilize before a new government was established that would work against their interests. By raising the issue of education, the PLM also pointed out the dangers that government presents through the operation of institutions. Ricardo in 1910 wrote: "pan, justicia, educación, progreso...que no podra dar nunca la Ley Electoral...es lo que necesitan los pueblos...Se necesita civilización verdadera, establecida con la educación racional."<sup>15</sup> For the PLM, no government could provide the kind of education that the PLM advocated. What the

PLM advocated was a new society that would create and ensure liberation by encouraging the masses to take control of their communities, including their education.

### Practice

In its intention to mobilize the Mexican people, the PLM did more than propagandize educational ideals. It also put its ideas in practice. The newspaper itself was the PLM's primary educational outlet. In several issues, the *Regeneración* staff referred to it as a "periodico educativo."<sup>16</sup> The newspaper regularly printed reading lists of major critical theorists of the time as well as editorials and columns written by notable anarchist authors. At times, when the PLM needed funds, its members tried to appeal to the public by saying that they needed to continue their "obra de educacion."<sup>17</sup> The purpose of disseminating all the information through *Regeneración*, was to educate and to provoke its audience toward civic action. Although the newspaper served to fund *Regeneración* and the Junta, the educational value was not diminished.

The PLM opened and maintained an educational dialogue that was evident in the pages of *Regeneración*. Their Plan of 1906 is a clear example. Unlike manifestos used by other political movements, the PLM's Plan was created with the cooperation of the readers of the newspaper. Months before publishing the document, the PLM asked the readership to send the Junta a list of reforms it wanted enacted. Thus, the Plan was more an articulation of the people's demands and not ones issued to them. As political organizers, PLM members were practicing their ideas of collectivism rooted in anarchism. Socially, as educators, they were encouraging the people to promote their own liberation by involving them in the process. By asking their readers for contributions and supporting their requests, the PLM challenged the relationship between political leaders and the populace.<sup>18</sup>

The PLM was also aware of its audience's limited education. To address this issue, the PLM encouraged reading the newspaper out loud and added political images to their publication.

The goal of *Regeneración* was to distribute useful information to the public. Limiting its reach to only those who were literate would stifle mass organizing. By having the newspaper read out loud and using images as propaganda, the PLM ensured that its message reached the people who perhaps needed it most. This pedagogical practice stood in contrast to the passive miseducation that the PLM accused the Mexican government of providing in public schools. The PLM and *Regeneración* filled the gap left by an exclusive education that worked in the interests of the propertied and wealthy. The PLM's was an educational movement toward liberation.

The PLM complemented this effort of making education accessible by adding reading lists for its readership. The books focused on various topics, including education, anarchism, feminism, and religion. Material written by anarchist thinkers Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Peter Kropotkin, and others were also included. Although the reading list section seemed to simply be a fundraising campaign, its purpose was to disseminate materials related to critical topics of the day. The PLM could have fundraised by using the limited space in *Regeneración* to advertise local businesses, as was customary in newspapers of the day. Instead, they used the space to encourage people to read books that would aid them in their liberation.

For a brief time in 1912, this book list evolved into the section titled "Biblioteca de Escuela Moderna" or "Escuela Moderna." The major difference was that the PLM now categorized the readings by their educational purpose. The books were divided into three main categories: young children, older children, and adults. The list became more of an annotated bibliography than a list of recommended readings. Fewer books were included, and their descriptions more detailed. The focus of the column became the educational usefulness of books rather than their fundraising value. With the new version of the reading list, the PLM was directly addressing those groups that were successful in establishing schools. In addition, the

PLM provided a lesson plan for those who did not have a school but could use the material and distribute the information during organizing meetings or at their homes.<sup>19</sup>

Promoting accessible educational practices was only the first step in providing a socially conscious and egalitarian education. The next step would be the establishment of schools, *escuelas racionalistas*, which could implement these practices in a systematic manner.

Consistently, the PLM promoted the educational model established by Francisco Ferrer. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1912, *Regeneración* published an article written by Ferrer entitled “El Programa de la Escuela Moderno.” In this article, Ferrer described the goal of the school and how it would be set up in Spain. PLM members identified this school model as conducive to the Mexican population in Mexico and the U.S. and thereby created a transnational bond between anarchists in Europe and the Americas.

One of Ferrer’s goals was to establish a school that departed from the dogmatic teachings of clergy education and instead taught based on reason and science. In this school, children would be taught their value as both individuals and as part of a collective society. Moreover, Ferrer also planned for his school to integrate both sexes and all social classes. He emphasized the inclusion of women in both education and societal obligations outside of the traditional gender structures and norms. Ferrer planned to implement gender equality at his school to inspire a new society to do the same. He, like the PLM, advocated feminist and gender egalitarian ideas and practices. He believed it was important to employ these ideas as educational models so that children were taught and socialized in a different way. The PLM and Ferrer were pioneers in this area even though there were limits among anarchists to their notion of gender empowerment.

The PLM and supporting groups took on the challenge of establishing schools. As early as 1910, there was mention of community centers or organizations established by the PLM, or its sympathizers, with the purpose of providing education. That same year, in a November issue of

*Regeneración*, the PLM advertised a Los Angeles-based group in a segment titled “Centro de Cultura.” Originally a group formed to support *Regeneración*, it quickly became a cultural organization. The segment in the paper advertised their meetings, which typically featured guest speakers who discussed a variety of topics. The PLM encouraged its readers to attend and support the group. Although not a school in a traditional sense, this was an example of the PLM attempting to put its educational ideas into practice.

By 1912 evidence shows the establishment of schools in various cities around the Southwest. In Como, Texas, Marion, Texas, and Santa Paula, California, *Regeneración*-affiliated groups established schools. The schools had positive results. They could sustain themselves and even provided funds for the newspaper in Los Angeles when monies were needed.

Unfortunately, *Regeneración* did not cover many details about the schools’ curriculum or pedagogy. Later, in 1915, the newspaper published an article by an organization called “Grupo Racionalista” in which the group detailed their plan to set up a school in San Antonio, Texas. In 1916, a similar column featured the work of another group in Laredo, Texas. Again, not much detail was given about the school, but its existence is proof that the PLM’s long campaign of promoting education had inspired several groups to establish schools.

In Los Angeles, apart from the “Centro Cultural,” there was one additional example of an educational center established by PLM affiliates. In 1913, an organizer named J.F. Moncaleano published a series of articles promoting his “Casa del Obrero Internacional.” Moncaleano, who successfully established a similar center in Mexico City in 1906, hoped to do the same with a group in Los Angeles. The plan was to house the center in a large building to serve as an organizing center for workers and the *Regeneración* staff. The building would include rooms for

workers and migrants to use as a shelter. A library and gymnasium would be provided free of cost. The main project to be established, however, was an escuela racionalista.

The layout of the school supported collectivist practices. The PLM planned to divide the space into classrooms for children and adults. Also, dormitories for children whose parents wished them to be live-in students would be available. Unpaid volunteers, mostly intellectuals from supporting groups, would serve as the instructors. The proposed courses emphasized a scientific and reason-based approach. A variety of languages would be taught including Spanish, French, Italian, and English, attesting to a transnational organizing context. All classes would be co-ed and taught by teachers of male and female sexes. The school organizers sought to involve both the parents and their children in the center. The PLM encouraged the parents to attend evening courses and to use the materials provided in the library to educate their children at home. Yet, the school and the organizing center itself would remain autonomous of each other and the other groups housed in the building; the founders believed this in practice would be a true anarchist community center.

Unfortunately, the center never came to fruition due to supposed faults of Moncaleano. After March 1913, there was no further mention of the center and the school. Prior to this, *Regeneración* provided regular information about the development of the center and asked for support from the community. *Regeneración*, through articles written by Ricardo and others, however, later reported that Moncaleano was accused of molesting young girls in Havana, Cuba while working in a school and was excommunicated by the PLM. Whether these accusations were true or not is debatable. Moncaleano could have been the predator the PLM accused him of being. However, the PLM were known to accuse defectors or ex-allies of sexual improprieties, as well as using homophobic language, to tarnish their reputations. These verbal criticisms highlight the limits to anarchist organizers understandings of gender and sexuality equality. Whether the



school and center were continued after the expulsion of Moncaleano was not revealed, at least not through *Regeneración*. It is doubtful, however, that this would be the case. The center was very much Moncaleano's personal project. Although largely unsuccessful, the support for a school and organizing center illustrate the PLM's educational values and priorities.

### Conclusion

The inception of *Regeneración* coincided with the beginning of social upheaval that characterized México for the first two decades of the twentieth century. The PLM published a newspaper that sought to give guidance to political change on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Through this newspaper, the PLM communicated its ideas to its readers about the Díaz regime, revolution, and the hope for a new social order. Educational advocacy provided an important forum for imagining a better and more human society. *Regeneración's* popularity with the working class allowed the PLM to create an educational community using the newspaper as a point of interaction. PLM members published essential information about the state of Mexican society and the events of the revolution and its leaders. In turn, their readers provided the PLM with important content and financial support to continue their labor. The PLM's goal was to be part of the revolution in Mexico and be present for the establishment of a new, liberated society. Unfortunately, the PLM's popularity also caused it to be constantly persecuted by Mexican authorities, eventually forcing their exile. Importantly, this made them internationalists not only in theoretical inspiration, but in organizing practice and critical horizons.

The PLM believed that education produced more active civic beings. PLM members made modest efforts to align education with critical and humanist thought, as well as connecting transformational struggles with transnational contexts. Organizing the people to fight for their liberation was not enough. Critically, the people had to decide what their liberation meant for their revolution to be truly anarchist. Like in many regimes, in Mexico education worked to

socialize the oppressed into accepting their situation and the oppressor into perpetuating that oppression. Critical education gave the people courage to seek self-determination in the face of oppression, making it essential to the birth of a new society.

The PLM's educational model worked in two stages. First, the PLM used their newspaper as a medium for information. It published articles and literature, and suggested books for people to read to begin their education. In practice, *Regeneración* served as both an organizing and educating tool. Later, the PLM promoted and supported the establishment of escuelas racionalistas, or modern schools, to give children a progressive education based on scientific and secular knowledge. In this capacity, the PLM was the most successful. Although the Los Angeles-based group did not establish a school, various groups around the Southwest did achieve that goal, at least for a time. In the end, the PLM served as a catalyst for a social revolution that aided and influenced the change created by the Mexican Revolution and cemented a progressive radical heritage among Mexican communities in the United States connected to other struggles in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Hart's *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) and Michael J. Gonzales' *The Mexican Revolution, 1910–1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002) are a good starting point for those interested in analysis of the Mexican Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> PLM groups around Mexico and the United States included anarchists, communists and socialists. The PLM Junta was most influenced by Peter Kropotkin's writings on anarcho-communism.

<sup>3</sup> Ethel Duffy Turner gives a detailed biographical account of Ricardo Flores Magon and the Magonistas in *Ricardo Flores Magon y el Partido Liberal Mexicano* (Mexico: Comision Nacional Editorial del C.E.N., 1984). John M. Hart, in *Anarchism & the Mexican Working Class, 1860–1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), analyzes their activities in Mexico and within the context of the Mexican Revolution. Juan Gomez-Quinones, in *Sembradores, Ricardo Flores Magon y el Partido Liberal Mexicano: A Eulogy and Critique* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Aztlan Publications, 1973), discusses their activities in Mexico and the United States and argues their importance within Mexican and Chicano history.

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<sup>4</sup> Digitized copies of *Regeneracion* and works written by Ricardo Flores Magon can be found in the archive “Archivo Electronico Ricardo Flores Magon” sponsored by the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia, <http://www.archivomagon.net/Inicio.html> (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Consult Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938) and David Viñas, *Anarquistas en America Latina* (Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Katun, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> Consult Hart, *Anarchism & The Mexican Working Class*.

<sup>7</sup> In Enrique Flores Magon and S. Kaplan, *Pelemos contra la injusticia* (Mexico: Libro Mex, 1960) Enrique Flores Magon talks about their activities at the time.

<sup>8</sup> "El Deber de los Parias," *Regeneracion*, February 1, 1906: 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> “Mexican: your best friend is a rifle.”

<sup>10</sup> “We must arm ourselves, its true; but we must also arm our minds.”

<sup>11</sup> Sanftleben, Alfred G, "Amigos Mexicanos," *Regeneracion*, September 24, 1910: 2.

<sup>12</sup> Willliam Archer, *The Life, Trial, and Death of Francisco Ferrer* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1911).

<sup>13</sup> “[The] chains of the free.”

<sup>14</sup> “This is how the tyrant shuts all of the doors on the working class, snatching away the two principal agents of moral strength: education and well-being.”

<sup>15</sup> “Bread, justice, education, progress...of which electoral laws may never give...is what the populace needs....True civilization is needed, established with rational education.”

<sup>16</sup> “educational newspaper.”

<sup>17</sup> “labor of education.”

<sup>18</sup> La Junta Organizadora del Partido Liberal Mexicano, "Programa del Partido Liberal y Manifiesto a la Nacion," *Regeneracion*, July 1, 1906: 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> In January of 1912 it is called “Biblioteca Sociologica de ‘Regeneracion’.” Later in the year, in August and November, the other two titles are used.

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